

Bringing Your New Cat Home

LittleV&Friends
Animal rescue

Dearest Friend,


Congratulations on your new family member!

Bringing a new kitten into your life is a big commitment and one that comes with many joys, as well as responsibilities. We are thrilled that you have decided to take this step and adopt with LittleV&Friends Animal Rescue.

Your new companion will surely become a part of your family - you will provide them with nourishment, shelter and warmth, keeping them indoors away from the many hazards of the modern world. But with this loving assimilation into the core of the family, we tend to forget that cats were once free-roaming, wild animals not too long ago. Having domesticated, and thus radically changing the environment of our furry friends, it is up to us to help them to succeed in a household environment. To do this, we need to provide plenty of activities and enrichment, training, and outlets for them to exhibit their natural, innate behaviors. Provide these things and you will be rewarded with years of companionship, friendship and love.

On our part, we are committed to helping you to transition your new family member into the heart of your home.

Sincerely,



Vivian Truong
Founder



Daniel Lee
Adoption Coordinator

WHAT TO EXPECT

Whether your new companion has come from a foster home, shelter or pound, it can take time for them to settle into a new environment. The key to introducing your new pet into your home is patience and understanding. Your cat may be stressed or anxious when being introduced into the home as new sights, sounds and smells are all very overwhelming at first! Give them some space and your new pet will learn to trust you and their environment in a matter of time.

PREPARING YOUR HOME

As tempting as it may be to give your new pet the run of the house right away, moving into a new home can be a stressful experience for cats. Instead, having a safe, confined area allows for them to make a gradual transition to the home.

This small area is where your pet should stay until they are completely comfortable with their new home. The ideal space is small, quiet, and easy to close off with a door like a bedroom, bathroom or laundry. You will need to furnish this safe haven with water and food bowls, bedding, toys, a scratching post, and a litter box as far away from the bed and food as possible.

Let your cat adjust to the room, and to you. Do not force any interactions as this can be overwhelming. Instead, you can coax your new pet with treats or by playing with an interactive toy. With some patience, your new cat will learn that you are not a threat but a friend! Once your cat is comfortable with this space, expand their access to the entire house. This introductory process may be instant or take a few days to weeks depending on your cat.

SUPPLIES

You will need a number of supplies to help you care for your cat, including:

- Balanced, high-quality food
- Water and food bowls (ceramic or stainless steel)
- Litter and tray
- Cat bed
- Cat carrier
- Scratching post and toys
- Treats
- Grooming brush and nail trimmer
- Collar and I.D tag
- Cat toothbrush and toothpaste
- Parasite preventatives

FEEDING

Whatever you decide to feed your new pet, a high-quality, balanced diet ensures that they are getting the necessary nutrients to grow and thrive. Avoid supermarket brands and look for a diet high in protein. Some recommendations are Royal Canin, Hill's Science Diet and Ziwi Peak, but there are also plenty of other trustworthy brands. Do not change your pet's diet suddenly as this may cause stomach upset, resulting in diarrhea, vomiting, and/or bloody stools. Changing an animal's diet should be done slowly over a week, adding small amounts of the new food gradually until your pet has fully transitioned to the new diet. Along with food, make sure your cat always has access to clean, fresh water. Discuss feeding with your veterinarian the first time you visit with your new pet.

Adjust your cat's feeding schedule by age:

- Up to 12 months: Allow your kitten to eat ad-lib. At this stage of rapid growth and development, kittens require a lot of calories. Free-feed your kitten by leaving a bowl of kibble where they have access whenever hungry.
- Adulthood: By twelve months, your cat is no longer a kitten. As she approaches adulthood, you can begin transitioning to an adult cat food. You should also start keeping an eye on your cat's weight to make sure she's not being overfed.

ENRICHMENT AND MENTAL STIMULATION

An indoor life is one without strife! Indoor cats require adequate exercise and environmental enrichment to stay healthy and to be able to exhibit their natural behaviours. Cats with a stimulation-rich environment are less anxious, sleep more, and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Here are some measures you can take to ensure that your home is a feline-friendly, stimulating environment:

- Cats are often social animals so we recommend adopting two cats that get along well to keep each other company
- Provide plenty of horizontal and vertical climbing space such as tall cat towers, window hammocks and cat shelving.
- Rotate a variety of toys to keep your cat amused and interested.
- Provide hiding spaces such as cardboard boxes or cat caves to play and sleep in
- Scratching posts keep their nails in peak condition and prevents unwanted scratching of furniture
- Play with your cat daily and give them plenty of attention and company
- Provide nice sunny spots or window sills to lie on so they can watch the outside world for entertainment.
- Provide more than one litter tray location, keeping toileting areas away from eating and sleeping areas.
- Consider enclosing your backyard with cat netting or a similar product that will still allow your pet some safe outdoors time.
- Take your pet for supervised time outside with a cat harness to enjoy the sun.
- Research shows that some pheromone products such as Feliway or Rescue Remedy can help to calm cats.

HEALTH CHECKS

Your new kitten will most likely need to visit the veterinarian soon after adoption to receive the necessary course of initial vaccines and parasite preventatives. This is also a good opportunity for you to register your details with your local veterinarian should there be a time where your cat may need a visit. Even as an adult, your pet should have an annual health check up and vaccine booster to ensure that they are in good health and protected from diseases.

Be prepared, too, for emergencies. Have the name of your nearby emergency veterinary services handy, and know how to get there in a hurry if necessary.

VACCINATIONS

Regular vaccinations are essential to your pet's ongoing health. They work to protect your cat from contagious and preventable diseases. Some of these diseases can be fatal and many don't have a cure, so vaccinating your cat is very important in keeping them safe and healthy. Vaccination schedules will depend on your cat's lifestyle and age. Kittens will need a series of injections known as a 'primary course' to build up their immunity. Once your kitten has had their first round of vaccinations, your local vet will help you to decide the best long-term vaccination program to keep your cat in good health.

Core vaccines are essential for every cat as they protect from serious diseases. These vaccines are often grouped together into a single injection called the F3 vaccine:

- Feline Herpes Virus
- Feline Calicivirus
- Feline Panleukopaenia

Non-core vaccines may be recommended by your vet depending on your cat's circumstances and other lifestyle elements. These vaccinations protect against:

- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus
- Feline Leukaemia
- Feline Chlamydia

Kitten core vaccination schedule:

- 6 to 8 weeks old – first vaccination
- 10 to 12 weeks old – second vaccination
- 14 to 16 weeks old – third vaccination

Adult cat booster vaccinations:

According to the Australian Veterinary Association, the core vaccines are to be administered every 1-3 yearly. The best protocol for your cat can be determined by your veterinarian.

CONCLUSION

We hope this information will be helpful in transitioning your new pet into your home. If you have any further questions, our rescue team will be available to offer advice.

Congratulations on your new feline friend!